A

General Epiſtle.

By William Dewsberry.

Dear Friends, whom the Lord hath in this his Glorious Day viſited, and in his Light plucked as Brands out of the Fire, to wait upon him, that his Great Work of Regeneration may be perfected in all of you, to your Eternal Comfort, and the Glory of the Name of our God forever, &c. And my dear Friends, ſeeing many are Called, and few Choſen; many Convinced, that are not Converted; and many come forth with us, and go forth from us, that are not of us, as by ſad Experience hath been witneſſed, &c. and from the deep Senſe of this working of the Enemy, I am conſtrained to ſend this *Epiſtle* amongſt you, knowing the Kingdom of God is compared unto Ten Virgins, Five Wiſe and Five Fooliſh, who had all Lamps, and ſlumbred in the Secure Mind, until they were awakened to enter in with their Lord, then were the Fooliſh Virgins made manifeſt, that though they had Lamps like the other, yet wanting the Oyl, they neither did or could enter, &c. Oh! dear and tender Friends, let all Dread the Lord, who make mention of his Name in the Light of Chriſt; for this Parable is to you, unto whom

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the Lord hath ſent to preach to you and in you the Word of his Kingdom.

And this is upon my Spirit, in the Word of the Lord to you all convinced of the precious Truth of our God, truly to examine and ſearch your Hearts with the Light of Chriſt Jeſus, that you may have a certain Knowledge, how it is with you, and how you eſcaped the ſubtil Wiles of the Enemy, which have hindred ſo many from the Poſſeſſion of the Life of Truth; and that you may truly diſcern, how the Enemy draws into the fooliſh Conceitedneſs, in the Out-ſide and Formal Profeſſion of the Truth feeding upon the Knowing Part, and ſo ſtoppeth the Hunger that ſhould reach the Life; and then in an Exaltedneſs ſaith, *I See, Know, am Clothed, and want Nothing*; when they are Blind, Naked, Miſerable and want all things, and this is the State of all the Fooliſh Virgins, who dwell in the Outward Court, and place all their Confidence in the Form, and Outſide, and Profeſſion of Truth, and ſo has loſt the Senſe of that Heavenly Hunger, which muſt poſſeſs the Life hid with God, or elſe it muſt mourn out its dayes in Sorrow. Therefore all dear Friends, watch dilligently to the Heart-ſearching Light, that this Myſtery of Iniquity you may all diſcern, that ſo the Enemy may not prevail againſt you, to turn you aſide, either to the Right Hand or to the Left, that whatever the Lord has convinced you of to be Evil, you may wait upon him for Strength, to preſerve you out of it, that ſo you may Anſwer God's Witneſs in the Regulation of your Converſation in the Uprightneſs of your Hearts, ſo you may ſtand clear before the Lord, that you are willing to do and ſuffer whatever the Lord ſhould call you to; and when you have done all this, then be you watchful to the Heart-ſearching Light, that the Enemy doth not draw your Minds to place your Confidence in the Work of Righteouſ-

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nefs you have done, as the *Ground of your Hope and Calling in Christ*, and want *Faith in him*, and ſo cauſe you to reſt in your *Services*, and ſo come ſhort of the *hidden Life*, enjoyed through Faith in the Light and Life of Chriſt, our Righteouſneſs. I beſeech you, *dear Friends*, Wait to know your Paſſage in this great Myſtery, where the Entrance is into the *Straight Gate*, where all the *Fooliſh Virgins*, though their Lamp in the Outward Profeſſion be never ſo Glorious, yet through Pride in their Attainments, never entered into this Reſt; and here is the fartheſt that ever any come, that make a Profeſſion of Truth, that go from us, and are not of us. So tender Friends, that truly ſeek God's Glory, and ſo love his Light that you are willing to give up Life & all to do his Will; and when the Enemy would draw you to reſt in what you have done, and ſo take the Jewels of God and play the Harlot, and deck Your Selves; you Dread the Lord, and in his Light you ſee more Light; and you ſee, That all that you have done is your Duty and your reaſonable Service which you muſt do, or otherwiſe you periſh eternally, and yet your poor Souls in the Light travail on in the Foot-ſteps of the Flock of the Mournful Companions, who are weeping in Secret, and inwardly ſeeking the Lord God, to be Married unto him in that *hidden Life* which is hid with Chriſt in God; and until you enjoy the *Marriage-Union*, in deep Humiliation, you wait in the Light, for the Lord to create you to a *lively Hope in Chriſt Jeſus*, the *Second Adam*. And you tender Children of my Father, who can underſtand in your Heavenly Travail and Exerciſe of Spirit what is here written, Lift up your Heads & ſtay your Mind; in the Light of the Lord Jeſus, which ranſacks your Hearts, and doth not only keep you in Holineſs of Converſation, but makes you weary of living under the Dominion of your own Thoughts and Wills: Therefore I beſeech you in the

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Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; watch to the Heart-searching Light, that discerns your Thoughts and Intents, and judgeth your Thoughts, and all Fearfulness and Unbelief; and wait in the Measure of the Light and Life, that quickeneth your immortal Souls, and hath begotten heavenly Breathings, Hungerings and Thirstings to eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of the Lord Jesus. Oh thou blessed Birth! let not Streightness be upon thy Spirit; for the Bowels of the almighty God yearn towards thee, which cannot be satisfied with any Thing but the pure Presence of Christ to reign in thy Heart, and to exercise heavenly Authority in his Throne in thy Conscience: Oh tender Babe born of the immortal Seed! lend not thy Ear to any of thine own Thoughts, Doubts and Unbelief; neither to the Accuser, who seeks every way to discourage thee, for trusting in the Name of the Lord; but diligently incline thou thy Ear to the righteous Counsel, which is the Light and Life: The Lord will satisfie thy hungry and thirsty Soul with his everlasting Loving-kindness in Christ Jesus, and will create thee to a lively Hope, and marry thee to himself in his own Righteousness, where thou wilt receive Dominion to reign over thy own Thoughts and thy own will, and to walk in his Strength in the Word of Faith, which will give thee Victory over the world within and without; so will thy Heart be kept pure, thy Conscience clean, and thou cloathed with the glorious Garment, a meek, low and a quiet Spirit, and so become the Righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, the second *Adam*, and the Lord of Life and Glory; and here is the Dwelling-place of all the Sons and Daughters of *Sion*, Citizens of the new *Jerusalem*, who walk in the Light as he is in the Light, and so are Partakers of his Divine Nature, and as he is, so are we in this present world, bearing his Name in his righteous Power, guiding us in his Light, Thoughts and Will, which

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keeps us in the heavenly Fellowship with the father in the Son, and one with another in him.

So all my dear Friends, Brethren and Sisters, who do witness proud ambitious Self buried in this heavenly Baptism, in Conformity to Christ in his Death, and you made alive through Faith in Christ our Light and Life, as you have received Christ, so walk in him, in all Humility, and godly Fear, and true VVatchfulness, that your own Thoughts VVill and Unbelief, have no Dominion over your Spirits; but every Minute of Time as they appear, through Faith in Christ the perfect Light and Life, keep your Dominion, and reign over them: And thus in Christ being victorious over all Self in you, you will reign as Kings, in the Authority of the glorious Truth of God, over all the Power of Darkness without you: So whatever you suffer for the Testimony of the Name of Christ, he takes it as done unto himself; and better a Millstone were hanged about their Necks, and they cast into the Sea, then hurt or offend the least of you my Brethren and Sisters, who are regenerated and born again, and your Confidence is in the Lord alone: So in all your Sufferings, whether spoiling Goods, or imprisonments, or whatever your Tryals be from the Sons of men, that you meet withal for your Testimony in the blessed Truth of God; let nothing Discourage you, but judge all your own Thoughts, and in the Glorious Light and Life in Christ Jesus rest in Peace in the pure Contentation within the Gates of *Sion*, where your Faith and Patience will so abound in you, that you shall weary out all your Persecutors, & the Blessing of the Almighty God will be upon your Families, who are rent one from another to fulfil the Sufferings of the Body, and you shall wear your Crowns, who thus patiently wait in a Quiet Mind and Resigned Will; And in the *word of the Lord* I declare it to all you, who suffer

Imprisonment, as is before written, *That all the Wrath of the Power of Darkness shall not be able to keep you an Hour longer then the King of Eternal Glory hath determined for the Renown of his Glorious Truth on Earth, and your Comfort forever*: Therefore let Patience have its perfect work; for, *in Peace are we to Conquer, and in Quietness to Prevail over all that resist the rising of the King of Glory, who liveth in us, who hath been Dead but now Alive*; in whose Life keep your Habitation in the *Word of Faith*, which is in our Hearts and in our Mouthes, and this the Word of Faith we preach unto you, and which you are to contend for against all Evil Attendances both within and without; for by this *Word of Faith* are the Armies that would alienate your Souls from the Enjoyment of the Lord within you beaten back and overcome, and the Mouth of the Roaring Lyon stopt, and all the Fiery Darts of the Devil both within you and without you quenched; therefore, as the *Valiants* of Christ Jesus, in his Name and Nature contend for the *Faith* which is delivered unto us his Saints; for this is our Victory that overcomes the World, even our *Faith*, as it was with our Brethren of old, in Ages past, *I have fought a good Fight, I have kept the Faith, henceforth is laid up for Me a Crown of eternal Glory*: And here is our Fellowship with the Father in the Son, and one with another in him; and all dear Brethren and Sisters, in this *Word of Faith* keep your Meetings, both valiantly and faithfully, that so none of you be found forsaking the assembling of yourselves, as the manner of some is, who are out of the Word of Faith; but as the Lord hath counted you worthy to be his Dwelling-place on Earth, and his Tabernacle amongst the Children of Men, Prize every Oportunity the Lord affordeth you, to meet together in his Powerful holy Name, with the Loins of your

Minds

Minds girt up with the *Word of Faith* in you, which will empty you of Self, and clothe you with the Garment of deep Humility, and fill you with the Riches of his Everlasting Love and Endless Mercies; for *God dwelleth with the Humble, but the Proud he beholds afar off*: So, without Faith in the Name of Christ and a Humble Spirit, the In-dwelling Presence of the King of Eternal Glory you cannot enjoy: Therefore I charge you in the Name of the Lord, *Hearken not to any Suggestions within you, nor Counsels without you, that would draw you to sleight or forsake meeting together in the Name of the Lord Jesus; but let every particular Member know your Service in the Body, that by your Faithfulness others be encouraged to meet with you, to wait in the Light, to feel the Living Refreshings of the Lord; and when you are refreshed with the Income of God's sweet Presence, be watchful, that not any utter words rashly before the Lord, to spend your Talent in a forward spirit, to satisfie the Lust, that would appear further then the Lord would have them, as some have done, which has brought them under a great Vail of Darkness, & have lost their Way, and returned with Sorrow, to the burdening the hearts of the Righteous; but Tender Plants, wait to know & truly discern between the Milk of the Word, and the Word; for the Milk of the Word is a Sweet Stream in the Refreshing, to the Nourishment of this heavenly Birth, that it may grow thereby; and some the Enemy hath drawn to speak forth that which they in a retired Silence were to feed upon, and grow up in its Nature.* Therefore, dear Friends, wait in the Light, that the VVord of the Lord may dwell plentifully in you, as it is written, so are we VVitnesses; *If any have my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully; is not my Word like a Fire and a Hammer, that breaks the Rocks in pieces?* which sealeth up the Testimony God calleth unto in the Heart of his Disciples: Therefore all be very circumspect in this weighty Matter, that whatever you feel of

the Refreshings of God in you, that you do not let any thing come forth, either in Words or Sounds, or any Noises, but what is brought forth in the Authority of this Living and Powerful Word; then will the Blessing of the Lord attend what is brought forth, be it much or little, either in *Words*, or *Hymns*, or *Joyful Sounds*, do not quench it, but answer the Lord in the Authority of the Word of Eternal Life; and the Sons and Daughters of the Lord, who are thus exercised, will not burden any, but it will be a Stream of Refreshing in the Hearts of all the Righteous; thus will every Vessel be preserved in the Life of Truth, and not go but as the Presence of the Lord goes before them: Therefore let all *dread* and *fear* the Mighty God, who have received any Gift, to see that the True Birth possess the Gift, which Birth makes *Self* of no Reputation, that so the Lord of Life may exercise every one in the Improvement of their Gift, to the Comfort of his People and his Eternal Glory, and none go further then they have Assurance they are called of the Lord, and his Heavenly Powerful Presence goes before them; so will the Lord bless the Travail of every Soul, and the Body be kept in the Pure, Sweet, Seasoned and Savoury Life, which edifieth the Body in the Love and Life of God, which cannot be expresst; and all that will not wait thus to be exercised, as is here written, but go out of their Places, burthen the Life, weary the Faithful, and if they do not give over, and submit to the Government of Christ to reign in them, and wait in true Silence, that they may speak no more of him but as he uttereth his Voice through them; my Soul pitieth them; for they will be as Wandring Stars, and Darkness will come upon them; therefore be Warned, whose Consciences witness what is here written to be your Conditions, &c.

And all tender Friends, Be very watchful and careful to keep

keep your Meetings upon all Services on Truth's Account, both Sons and Daughters, born of God, that there may be no Confuſion, but a ſweet Submiſſion to one another in the Light and Life of Chriſt Jeſus, that as the Lord hath bleſſed your *Meetings* and *Labour of Love for the Body's ſake*, keep your Minds ſtay'd upon the Lord, out of all Conſultings with *Fleſh* and *Blood*, or any Strivings to appear to be any thing but what the Lord is in you, to keep you all in Humility, in a pure Subjection unto Chriſt, that he may Silence all the Counſel of Fleſh in you, and keep you in his holy Dread and pure Fear, to receive Wiſdom from him, to guide you to determine all Matters brought before you, ſo that every one have your Eye to the Lord, to eye his Glory in all your Words and Works; ſo will Love abound, and the Bleſſing of the Lord will be in the midſt of you, to guide you all in his pure Fear *to do to every one as you would be done unto*, and watch over one another with a Pure Single Eye at all times, that your Single Eye may be to the Good in one another, and your Tenderneſs in the Love of God in all Humility to reach to the Meaſure of God, to raiſe it up, and thus will you ſtand in the Heavenly Nature Saviours upon Mount *Sion*, to bring again them that ſtray, and ſo reſtoring them with the Spirit of Meekneſs; and here is Chriſt and his Diſciples Waſhing one anothers Feet in all Humility and Heavenly Condeſcenſion (one unto another) the Strong bearing the Burden of the Weak, and gently leading them forth, out of that which burdens the Pure, into the Light and Path of Life, where the building up one another is in the moſt holy Word of Faith, where we ſit together in our Heavenly Places in Chriſt, where Self is made of No Reputation, but every one Serving the *Lord*, caſting down our Crowns before his Throne, and with one accord ſinging the Sons of the Redeemed from the Earth; all Glory,

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all Honour, all Praiſes & Thankſgiving-Dominion be given unto him, who is found worthy to ſit upon the Throne in our Conſciences, to feed us with the Bread that is ſure, and refreſh us with the Water that never faileth; ſo we that are many are made one Bread, eating the Fleſh of Chriſt, and drinking his Blood, where we have Life, and that abundantly, and we comforted together in our Heavenly Manſions, in our ſweet and pure Fellowſhip of the Goſpel in Chriſt our Righteouſneſs, who is One, his Name and Nature One in all his People; and *Salvation* is unto us for *Walls* and *Bulwarks*; and here have we Peace, in this Holy City, *New Jeruſalem*, which the World knoweth not, neither can they take it from us; & *here is no Strife nor Contention within her Gates*, but we witneſs the Promiſe of the *Lord* fulfilled, *I will make* Jeruſalem *a Quiet Habitation*: In this *City* there is no more *Curſe*, but the *Name and Image of God is written in the Foreheads of them that dwell therein*; that all that have to deal with them, as they mind God's Witneſs in any Meaſure, will confeſs, *Theſe are the People of the Moſt High God, born of the Righteous Seed, which the Lord hath Bleſſed.* And in this Heavenly Government, dear Brethren and Siſters, all keep your Meetings, and the bleſſed Preſence of the *Lord* fill all your Hearts, and inlarge his *Love* in you and amongſt you, to your mutual Comfort one of another, and the Honour of his Great Name, who is over all God bleſſed forever.

So will you, dear Friends and Brethren, comfort the Hearts of all Travailing Friends and Brethren, who have not loved their Lives to Death to ſerve the *Lord*, and gather you home into this Heavenly Reſt; the very Senſe of their *faithful Labours* & *Travails*, ſeeking nothing for Themſelves, but the Honour of God and your Eſtabliſhment in this Reſt, it takes deep Impreſſion upon my Heart, both they that have finiſhed, who here did wear the Garments of Humility, and

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now the Crown of Eternal Glory; & my dear Brethren that are yet on this side the Grave, who are labouring in the Service of the *Lord*, in *Faithfulness*, in the Gospel of the *Lord Jesus*; *dear Friends*, let your Hearts be affected as mine is, that the End of their *Labours* may be answer'd in your *Faithfulness*, in keeping your Meetings according to all the Exhortations that you have had through the *Faithful Labourers* and is expressed in this *Epistle*, that you may grow up as an Holy Priesthood, offering up the living and holy Sacrifice in your faithful Testimony and pure Unity of Spirit and Bond of Peace, where my Soul is bound up with you in this Heavenly Rest in Christ Jesus our *Light* and *Life* over all exalted in us to Reign, who is worthy for evermore, in whom I rest;

London, the 14th of the 11th Moneth, 1675.

Your Dear Brother,
William Dewsberry.

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